

# CASCADE

## COMIX MONTHLY

March 1978

No. 1 · 50¢



NEWS · REVIEWS · COMIX



# CASCADE

## COMIX MONTHLY

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CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY is published on the first of each month by Everyman Studios, 432 S. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903. Edited by Artie E. Romero. Subscriptions are priced as follows: U.S. and Canada, 6 issues \$2.50, 12 issues \$5.00, postpaid (first class mail). Overseas subscriptions are \$5.00 for 6 issues, \$10.00 for 12, single copies \$1.00, all sent air mail. Wholesale rates and ad rates sent on request. All unsolicited submissions should include adequate return postage if return is desired. Volume 1, number 1, March 1978 issue. Copyright 1978 Artie E. Romero, all rights reserved. CASCADE and CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY are trademarks of Everyman Studios.



REALM #7 is now available for immediate mailing. This is another all-comix issue, with a theme of science fiction and fantasy this time. "The Quasi Hydro Effect" by Darrel Anderson is the highlight of the issue, a 15 page strip. The covers and 8 interior pages are full color; 52 pages in all, for \$1 plus 30¢ postage.

EVERYMAN STUDIOS  
432 S. CASCADE AVE.  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80903

FLASHES!



RIP OFF COMIX #3 is now at the printer. The new FREAK BROTHERS is also in production. Another fabulous painting by Dave Sheridan graces the front cover.

"I'm giving up trying to get into all the neat new markets that seem to be opening for underground cartoonists," says Larry Todd, "like HIGH TIMES and PLAYBOY. To hell with them." In an interview to be published in the next issue of CASCADE COMIX MONTHLY, Larry also said he's "not going to quit doing comix...I intend to keep right on drawing the comix at my own damn pace."

His current project is a book of 26 stories written entirely by Harlan Ellison.

The Forty-Year-Old hippie by Ted Richards should be out in his own comic this month; Rip Off will be the publisher. This strip is running weekly in the Rip Off syndicate, as well as E.Z. Wolf by Richards.

In another upcoming CASCADE interview, Dan O'Neill says he's "been picking on Disney ever since I could pick up a pencil." When shown some great Mickey cartoons by Dan, I asked if he used the sketches to work out his hostilities toward The Mouse (or his oppressors). Dan replied, "I don't have any hostilities toward The Mouse at all. There are no oppressors, not for me. I'm the guy that's obnoxious...."

Fastdraw Studios is doing a monthly four page strip called "Mellow Cat" for SKATE BOARD MAGAZINE. A mellow cat is sort of the "daddy" of the skateboard set. The strip is full-color...

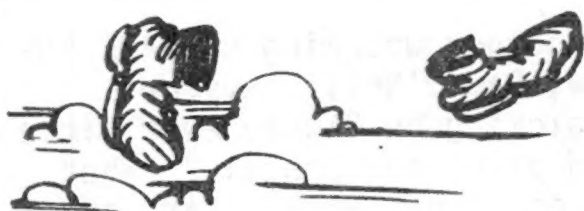
JUICE CITY is now available from Tucker Petertil, 223 Caledonia, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. This book, which is oversize and 52 pages, features some excellent work by George Metzger, Doug Hansen, Jim Phillips, A. West, and British cartoonist Hunt Emerson. The price is \$1.25.

STRANGE BREW is the title of a zine soon to be pubbed by John Cosgriff. Thus far contents include art by Fabian, Frazetta, Gene Day, Dave Sim, Alan Hanley, Bob Vojtko, Darrel Anderson (cover), Mike O'Neal, Alcalá, and Eric Vincent. More info on this when it appears.

"Star Weevils" by J. Michael Leonard is appearing weekly in the Rip Off Syndicate. Michael describes the strip as "sort of a cosmic Pogo."







A DISCUSSION WITH

# ted richards

**CASCADE:** *The Air Pirates Studio-- what was that like?*

**RICHARDS:** I don't remember a lot of it. We were very stoned at times. It was kind of a haphazard organization, so to speak. I came down from Seattle with Bobby London and Gary Hallgren. Bobby had more or less apprenticed with O'Neill for a couple of months when he was down in California about eight months before. He had come up to Seattle and had struck up a relationship with Shary Flenniken. I had met Shary earlier at a pop festival and had recognized her ability to draw; we had worked together on an underground newspaper in Seattle.

O'Neill, in the meantime, had been fired from the *Chronicle*, and was working upstairs from the Mitchell Brothers Theater on Eddie Street.

**CASCADE:** *He had a studio there?*

**RICHARDS:** Yeah, he more or less had a studio. He had moved out of Jenner, California, in the aftermath of his being fired from the *Chronicle*. He hustled us a little hole-in-the-wall place in the warehouse area here in San Francisco, and we were gonna draw some comic books. He struck a deal with Ron Turner to publish these. In his final days at the *Chronicle*, he had done some Disney characters in his strip: The Phantom Blot, Mickey Mouse, and Buckey Bug. He thought it would be a good idea to get together and draw all this Disney stuff. All of us, as cartoonists, were linked to that tradition, in one fashion or another.

**CASCADE:** *Sure. Disney set the style for funny cartoons, in a way.*

But when you guys started, you each seemed to take on the style of an old cartoon studio, or an individual cartoonist. For instance, Dan did *The Mouse*, and Bobby London was riffs of George Herriman.

**RICHARDS:** I guess Crumb can be given a lot of the credit for initially reestablishing links with that tradition in comics. It didn't take any act of brilliance to look at contemporary newspaper strips, even in the sixties, and see that they had gotten completely sterile and rubber stamped images. A lot of the cartoonists had already been dead for a while, and some of the classic strips were dying. Their names were still on the strips, and a lot of the major strips had already been taken over by the assistants. A lot of us were, in a way, cut out. If you were a young aspiring cartoonist in the middle of the cultural revolution in this country in the sixties, you felt that. There was just no question, if you wanted to draw comics, you just weren't gonna draw that crap that was coming out in the dailies. It said to you, just looking at it, "there's no room for you." Then suddenly Shelton was doing *Wonder Warthog* in the college humor magazines, and it said something more. The drawing was crude, in a way, but the writing was spontaneous. Crumb had been working through Kurtzman on *Help Magazine*, and had been doing greeting cards; he'd basically been drawing all his life. Somehow he was suddenly drawing in this older style. Subconsciously, if you know where Crumb was from, Cleveland, you know it depicts and

characterizes a tradition in comics. There are guys there with baseball caps on backwards, and snoid-like people running around; I lived in Cincinnati for a while; it's Crumb country.

CASCADE: A lot of people all over the country who were into comics, drawing and reading them, saw that certain energy, that electricity in Crumb's work and Shelton's, and I think it really changed a lot of people.

RICHARDS: Yeah, at the time I was influenced. Seeing those cartoons! I had been following cartoons all

my life, also as a kid I'd sort of made my mark as a class artist by being able to draw cartoons and characterize teachers. A couple of months out of each school year I'd be a cartoonist, then I'd get bored with it and play sports, or model airplanes.

I had just started dropping out. I had worked in an employment agency and classically straight management training jobs, and seeing that work, I just cut out. I'd been thrown out of the service a couple of years earlier for

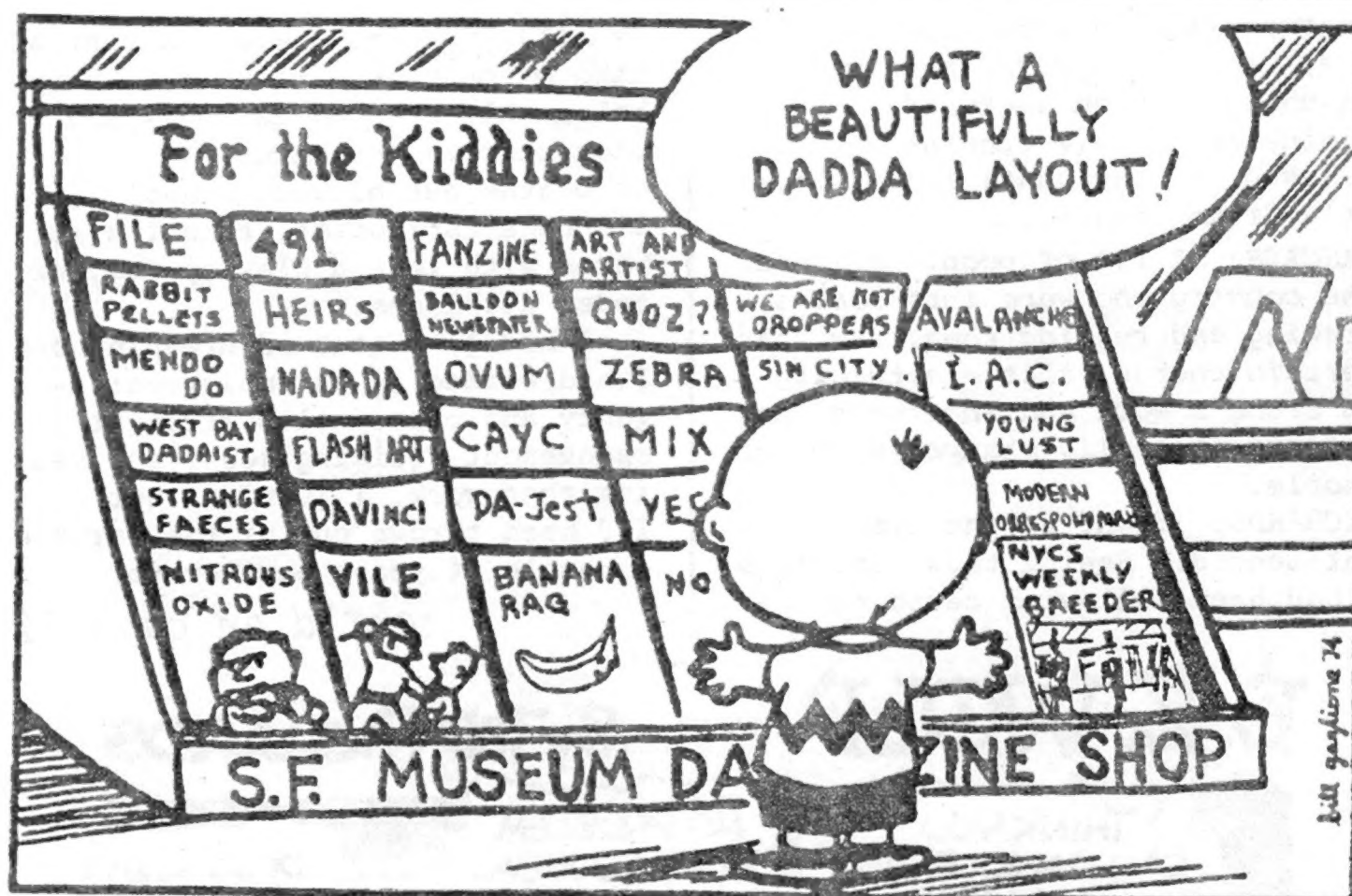
cont'd on page 12

# E.Z. WOLF

By TED RICHARDS







"Invest in Dada! Dada is the only savings bank that pays interest in eternity." --Richard Huelsenbeck; from DER DADA #1 (Berlin, 1919)

I once saw some copies of original dadazines (ca. 1920) under glass at the Yale Art Gallery. Essentially a privately published means of communication among an international network of Dada revolutionaries, the few remaining copies of these magazines, like RONGWRONG, 291, and THE BLIND MAN, now sit useless, as coveted art objects. The dadazines being published today serve the same function as the originals did in their time: as communiques mailed within an ever-growing circle of individuals and groups sometimes known as the Eternal Network. Today's Dadaists share with the originals a concern with such matters as the visual aspects of typography, photocollage, familiar objects in unfamiliar places, art guerilla activity, and the preservation of the Dada spirit.

"Freedom: Dada Dada Dada, a roaring of tense colors, and interlacing of opposites and of all contradictions, grotesques, inconsistencies: LIFE." --Tristan Tzara; "Dada Manifesto 1918," from DADA #3 (1918)

Probably the first of the current spate of dadazines was the NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL WEEKLY BREEDER. Originated by the controversial conceptualist Ken Friedman, editorship was passed on to Stuart Horn (The Northwest Mounted Valise), and finally to Tim Mancusi of the Bay Area Dadaists, under whom the BREEDER grew to 35 pages with Vol. 3 #7, a showcase issue featuring artists from everywhere. The final issue (Vol. 3 #8) featured 16 pages of work by Mancusi and Bill Gaglione. Both are probably still available; write to Tim at 443 Connecticut St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

THE WEST BAY DADAIST and 491 were the first two dadazines that I had contact with. Both were 4½ x 5½" mags and featured completed pages by a variety of contributors. In later issues, WBD became QUOZ?, and 491 grew to a larger size. The most recent issues of QUOZ? have had specific themes, i.e. #10 (poetry) and #12 (The Visual Poetry of Opal L. Nations). Unfortunately, neither QUOZ? nor 491 have been active in recent months, but queries as to the availability of back issues may be sent to Trinity Press, Box 1320, San Francisco, CA 94101 (QUOZ?); and Cow Studio, 120 Geary St. UP, Buffalo, NY 14220 (491).

Canada's FILE MEGAZINE is LIFE size and chronicles the planned 1984 Miss General Idea pageant, and related subjects like the changing face of glamour as arty image making, punk till you puke, and more. Highly recommended at \$10 for four issues from Art Metropole, 241 Yonge St. third floor, Toronto, Canada M5B 1N8. 50c gets you a catalog of other offerings.

Opal L. Nations' fine anthology, STRANGE FAECES, published upwards of 15 issues thru 1976. Concerning itself largely with the written word, STRANGE FAECES published fiction and poetry by an assortment of invited contributors. Check with Opal at 177 Augusta Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 2L4 as to whether any back issues can be had.

My own publication, MODERN CORRESPONDENCE MAGAZINE, first appeared in 1974, and is most memorable for its physical format: purse size, with plenty of fold-outs for those problem areas. #3 (Modren Correspondents), #4 (Mail Art Murders), and #5 (MC5/DC5) are available for 65c each from me at 1044 Chapel St. #507, New Haven, CT 06510.

Not for the squeamish is Anna Banana and Bill Gaglione's VILE, now in its fifth fab issue. With lots to read and lots to look at, in a very professional 8½ x 11" format, VILE #5 (actually Vol. 3 #2) is a bargain at \$3.50. Order from Banana Productions, 1183 Church St., San Francisco, CA 94114, and also inquire about Bill's archetypally titled DADAZINE.



Available from:

BUD PLANT  
BOX 1886  
GRASS VALLEY, CA 95945  
\$1.00 plus 30¢ postage

Two recent entries in the dadazine sweepstakes are OR and CABARET VOLTAIRE. OR, edited by Uncle Don Milliken, RFD #1 Box 315, Shelburne Falls, Mass. 01370, has put out several issues in the past year, each with a different size and format. CABARET VOLTAIRE, named for the Zurich nightspot where Dada was conspired and conceived, is on its second issue, a collection of mistakes subtitled "Errata". CABVOLT is the brainchild of S. HITCHcock at 6266 Madeline St. Apt. 97, San Diego, CA 92115.

This is by no means a comprehensive listing or history of the dadazines. That would probably be impossible because, as someone once noted, no one person sees them all. Conspicuous by their absence are the many dadazines being published in Europe, South America, and Australia. Plug yourself into the Mail Art Network and discover the obscurities for yourself. That's where the adventure lies.

--Tom Hosier



# quick ones

by BILL SHERMAN

## THE FIRST KINGDOM #7 BY JACK KATZ

In which Mr. Katz ups the science fiction in his 24-volume saga, with the fullest explanation of the origin of the gods yet--whether it's the truest is still up for grabs--and briefly returns to some characters you might have forgotten about, in addition to continuing his chronicle of Tundran and Fara, series hero and heroine, respectively. Some comix readers're gonna HATE the text abundance this time out, but don't listen to them: they're the ones readin' READER'S DIGEST condensations of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND....

Katz's art, meanwhile, is still growing larger. There are more full-panel pages this time out, but the quality of detail in 'em is so boggling that no one in their right mind would think of complaining. This ain't Kurrent Kirby padding but a genuine broadening of scope.

If you haven't started this from the beginning, you're missing quite an achievement.

## INSTANT #4 EDITED BY GEORGE ERLING

There's an in-joke gag directed at yrs trly in this, the fourth of Erling's sketch-and-cartoonzines. Yer critic mislabelled this book, calling it TASTY, in an apazine recently and GEORGE WON'T LET ME FORGET IT. Guy holds a grudge longer than Elvis Costello.

TASTY--I mean, INSTANT--is a small little zine, four to eight pages each time, and fulla YELLOW DOG-tabloid type comix. The tone of the zine is loose and informal and fun: this is the special dog ish and it includes four pages of dog doodles by the likes of Erling and Denis Kitchen, plus strips by Greg Spagnola and Gary Whitney. A jam by Bod Vojtko, Spagnola and Erling rounds out the issue. If comix have always meant more than comix to you--if they mean a certain sense of community or "fannishness"--then you'll love INSTANT.

(Issues 1 thru 3 are a quarter a piece; #4 is 35¢. All may be ordered from George Erling, 357 Newark Pompton Tpke, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444.)

## CORPORATE CRIME #1 EDITED BY LEONARD RIFAS

Call me a liberal sucker (I am), but I've a tendency toward greater critical tolerance with a book like this. Maybe it's the propagandist in me, hoping to snooker some innocent fan into Learning Something, I dunno. In any case I recommend this book, particularly to the kind of comix fan who hasn't been paying much attention to magazine journalism these last few years.



Those who have: much of the material in this book won't surprise you, tho some of the historical stuff might. Editor Rifas pulls out instances of corporate abuse from the present and past, and doles 'em to be depicted in comix and text page illustration. (My favorite example from history involves the Southern Pacific Railroad's California state bill prohibiting unfriendly political cartoons.)



While the art is erratic, some of it is Quite Fine. Text page illustrations are done in the manner of old-style political cartoons, and the best of these are by Guy Colwell and Denis Kitchen (who's always drawn a great smarmy capitalist). Best among the cartoons include Rip Off cartoonist R. Diggs' depiction of the Karen Silkwood case, Pete Poplaski's Chester Gould parody description of I.T.T. and the impeccable Greg Irons' industrial waste poisoning piece. While some of the stories may seem over-annotated--Rifas' historical scrupulousness intruding--it's hardly bothersome. Good research and fine comix. A sequel is in the works, and I hope they get Greg Irons to do the cover for that one, too.

**BIZARRE SEX #6 EDITED BY  
"STEVE KRUPP"**

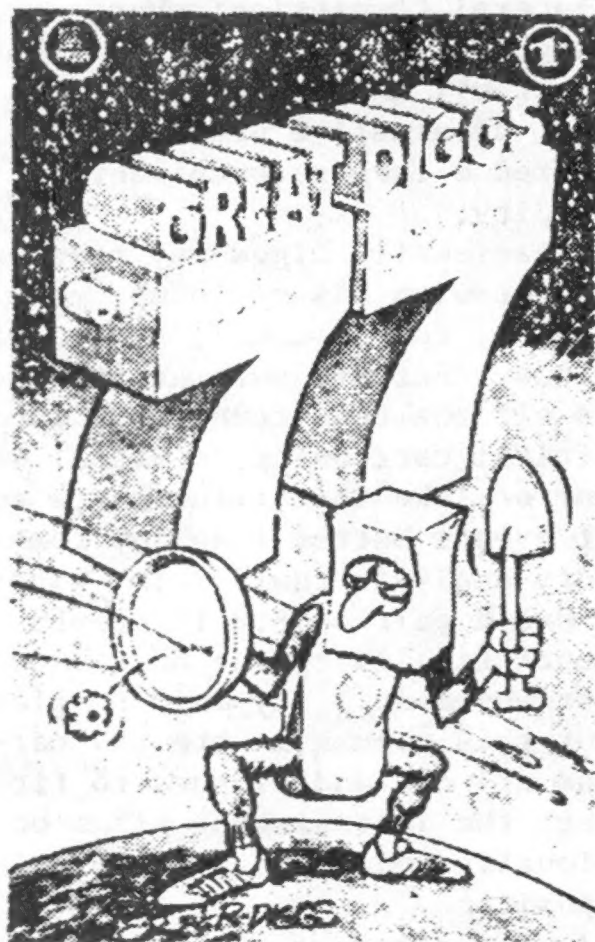
It should come as no surprise to anyone that this book is one of the underground's steady sellers. Comix have been getting by for years on the tension between an audience's simultaneous worship and anxiety re: the ol' two-humped beast--hence this book. BIZARRE SEX is one of those comix that both feeds and assuages audience angst by its approach to the subject of sex. Don't feel bad about being grossed-out, folks, this is bizarre sex! Nobody, no matter how openminded and liberal they like to think they are, need feel guilty by this book's geeks and their hang-ups. You can have yer outrage and feel on top of it, too.

Tops of the issue, in case that's relevant, include Sharon Kahn Rudahl's atypical (for this zine) "The Queen of Cats," an oriental folk tale that's both exotic and gently erotic; Steve Stiles' EC pastiche one-pager "Bizarre Sex Murder;" and George Erling's "A Boy, His Bike, and Love," which combines goofball art with outrageous male adolescent sexism. Some of the other material is predictable--from the Rich Corben sex worship cover to the S. Clay Wilson imitation--but'll probably go over big with the croud that buys



HEAVY METAL for the sexy pictures. Joel Beck contributes a buncha one-pagers, and they're typical Beck: satiric and funny, tho one of 'em doesn't have all that much to do with bizarre sex.

Wot the hell: we all know this issue is gonna sell.



Cartoonist, R. Diggs shovels through the muck of '77 in this 68-pg. digest.

At your comix outlet, or

\$1.30 (postpaid) to

**Rip Off Press, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 14158**

**San Francisco, CA 94114**



## GREAT DIGGS OF 77 (RIP OFF PRESS, \$1)

Mauldin and Herblock do it, so why not Ron Diggs, editorial cartoonist for the Rip Off Syndicate? A collection of editorial cartoons with pithy commentary along the edges (to remind those of us with short attention spans wot was happening at the time and give a few good one-liners) was inevitable considering the amount of material Diggs had accumulated. So why not?

If Diggs isn't yet as proficient a caricaturist as his compadres in the straight press--his Carter is inconsistent (but come to think of it...)--he definitely has a better line of thought. Less concerned with the superficial conflicts of modern politics, more involved with the Deep Roots: that's Diggs. While lesser men cranked out panels on Carter's honeymoon with the press, Diggs was looking at the Trilateral Commission; where straight papers blamed the Arabs for our oil and energy shortage, Diggs' alternative press panels fingered a larger conspiracy of stupidity.

Occasionally Diggs may take an easy out with his cartoons; some of his puns, for instance, seem a bit obvious. But his work at its best fits all the requirements of good political cartooning, a visual metaphor or joke that illuminates current events better than any tome or dry analysis could. (My favorite has a pair of F.B.I. agents voyeuristically spying on the feminist movement.) My main complaint about this volume is the way cartoons are cut and slashed to fit pages; the inconsistent sizes occasionally undermine the artist's composition.

As a cartoonist, Diggs may not yet be the slick equal of his establishment peers--or some of the other Rip Off artists, for that matter--but there's no reason to believe he eventually won't be. Editorial cartooning may not be as commercial an artform as, say, freak cat cartoons, but that's no

reason why you shouldn't check this volume out.

## COVER-UP LOWDOWN (RIP OFF PRESS, 75¢)

One neat thing about the Seventies: paranoia has never been more firmly ensconced in modern art... or more validated by its presence there, either, as it has in these conspiracy-soaked times. I think it's healthy myself.

*Cover-Up Lowdown* ("More Than Just a Comic Book," the press release sez--and it's RIGHT!) is designed to appeal to those folks more than half convinced by the *Illuminatus* trilogy. Half the book consists of one-panels originally done for the Rip Off Syndicate, and they're an entertaining combo of scary data and absurdo illustration. (eg. One panel about doctored shadows on Lee Harvey Oswald's famous gun-pose pic has Oswald's shadow wearing a clown hat.) Each panel's scrupulously footnoted, however: you can make up your own mind on what kinda sources each has, depending on what type paranoid you are.

The other half has fictional tomfoolery that's chocked fulla conspiracy satire: the first tale traces a dollar bill thru umpteen varieties of unscrupulous capitalist while the second details a plot by solar energy czars to subliminally control the populace of Indiana. (As if they'd want to.) In both tales collaborators Jay Kinney and Paul Mavrides show a strong sense of genre and plastic overload that recalls the best of the Firesign Theatre. There are a lotta smart laffs in this book.

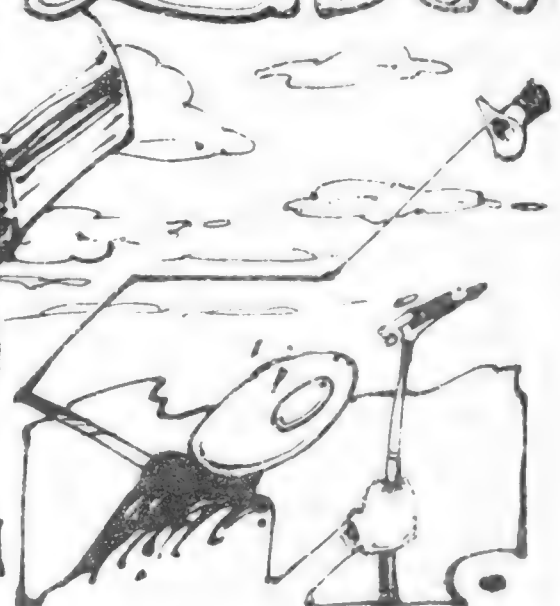
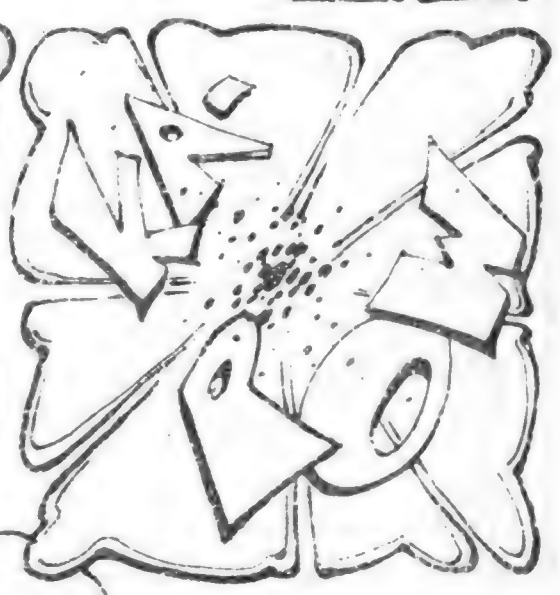
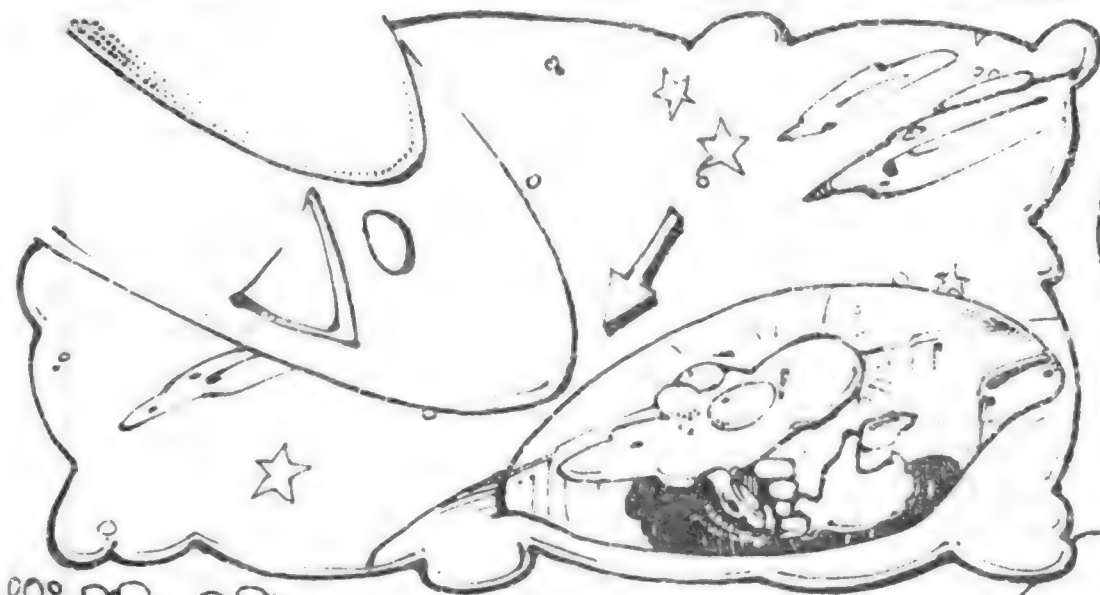
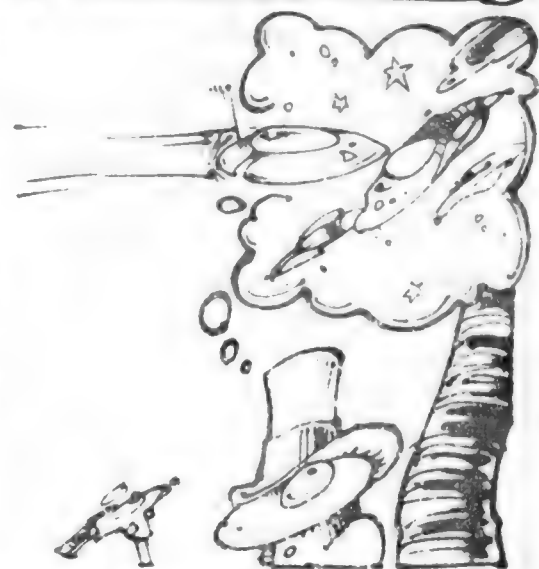
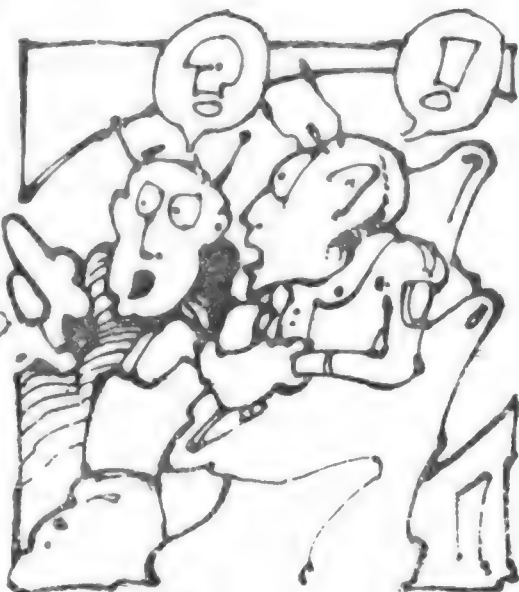
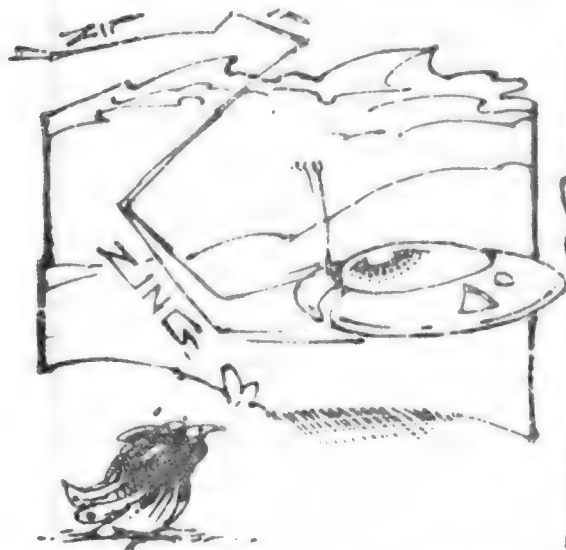
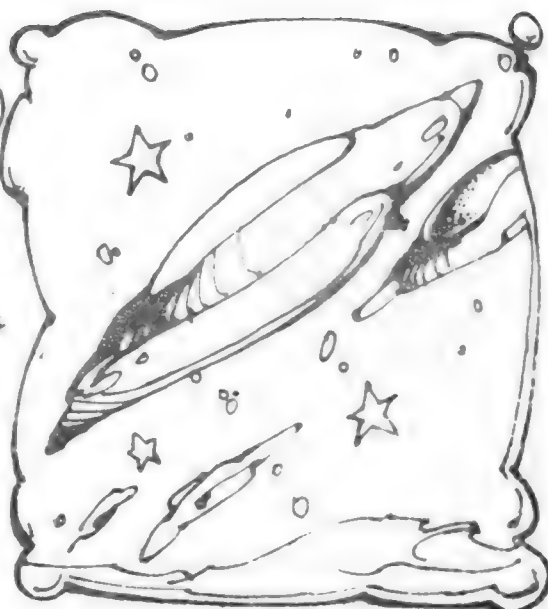
In addition to comix the boys include a quiz designed to shbw the reader that "You Killed Kennedy" and a moebius strip flow chart detailing Great Modern Conspiracies that's plain hysterical. (I didn't cut out my copy of the flow chart to see if it really makes a moebius, however. Too paranoid to try, I guess.)

Buy this book for a loved one. Then turn 'em in.

cont'd on page 15



# CASCADE





*cont'd from page 5*

smoking grass and had kind of reformed, but I hadn't given up on the idea. Plus I'd been a musician.

That style Crumb synthesized through his own personal kind of style. What Dan and the rest of us flashed on was why not just really go back and nail it! I guess you can give O'Neill most of the credit for articulating it, but it wouldn't have made any sense if the rest of us hadn't felt it also. They decided I had a storytelling ability similar to Bud Fischer, so they assigned me Bud Fischer. I was pretty cynical about this, to tell the truth.

I did learn something from imitating the styles, but Bobby probably received the worst feedback on it, because he was drawing Herriman just like Herriman, and he ended up doing Herriman stories.

CASCADE: *Yeah, he became Herriman.*

RICHARDS: There is this thing, no matter what kind of media game you're playing, the public likes to see you be original, or try to be, at least; and that was just too blatant and a lot of people didn't go along with it. There was heavy media psychology involved. He's adapted since then.

CASCADE: *But he brought Herriman forward in time. He used that style to do seventies material.*

RICHARDS: One defense I always had of it, if anybody was complaining to me behind Bobby's back was say, "can you draw it?" Just the fact that as a cartoonist he was able to copy and emulate that it demonstrated a pretty strong talent and a strong creativity right there.

Gary Hallgren got assigned Pollyanna and her Pals, because it's got this cheesecake quality to it, and he really likes that kind of material. When we did the Disney thing, that was the prototype for what we did later. I'd always had a thing for the Big Bad Wolf and folk tales. I was raised in the South and had been told a lot of stories, Uncle Remus. I thought it was a piss-off that Disney had

copyrighted all that stuff and claimed it as his own, without putting in the literary sweat to add more to it. He just copied it.

O'Neill was doing the Bug and the Phantom Blot and Mickey Mouse, and he had an obsession with that and so did Bobby, so they handled that. Gary did the Tortoise and the Hare, which O'Neill helped write.

So that's basically what evolved. I always thought the level of execution left something to be desired, but still there was a story there, and an effort being made to place Disney in its proper perspective. People have been under a burden of this Mickey Mouse thing, with Disney supplanting himself as a living Grimm's Brothers or Hans Christian Anderson, when the fact was that he didn't possess the real talent to create those stories or the philosophy and tradition behind them.

CASCADE: *After the Air Pirates split up, did you work on your own for a while?*

RICHARDS: Yeah. See, I'd come down to San Francisco to get into doing Dopin' Dan and that kind of stuff. I just felt that the Air Pirates thing was a transient stage, but it became the dominant thing. The way it was articulated to me was that we were going to do these parody comic books and then do our own books, our own characters, which was what I was more interested in. Also, I was an apprentice, in a sense, a learning cartoonist, and it was an opportunity to work with Gary, Bobby and Dan, who had far more experience. I'd only been drawing seriously for two years when I ran into these guys. I felt quite lucky that they saw enough in my abilities to let me get with them. I was really from the back woods.

CASCADE: *Where are you from?*

RICHARDS: North Carolina, and I grew up in the army; my father was an army sergeant.

CASCADE: *How did your current situation with Fastdraw Studios come about? How did this studio get together?*



RICHARDS: I was over at Rip Off for about a year and a half, working with Gilbert. I just wanted a little bit of autonomy; there was no hostility or anything like that. Gilbert was doing a lot of business in there and it was hard for me to conduct what I had to do. I wanted to try and do some different things. I'd known Michael for about a year or so, and he was interested in getting together for another kind of studio operation. Larry came to town, and that increased the numbers. Suddenly it became feasible that we get together. You need at least three people for something like this to work. We just happened to stumble across this place. We were looking around and hadn't found anything we really liked. I'd been here at this place about three years earlier with Willy Murphy, Gary Hallgren, O'Neill and a guy named Gary King.

CASCADE: Was this the original location of the Air Pirates?

RICHARDS: No, this was a post-Air Pirates studio, which O'Neill wasn't originally in. We'd formed it to get away from O'Neill. It's no animosity, and he knows the story too, but somebody as strongly creative as he is tends to dominate.

CASCADE: I really dig his stuff.

RICHARDS: Yeah, he's a super cartoonist. Anyway, we decided to strike off on our own. Murphy and I had been wanting to work together for some time. The Two Fools was one thing we ended up doing.

CASCADE: That's the only comic book I know of that's ever come out without any dialog in it.

RICHARDS: We were influenced by the French funny comics. Even though a lot of them had dialog, it was one of their techniques, sort of an international style in that even if they had dialog, you could follow the story without reading the words. For those who can read French, it adds something else to it. It was the most difficult thing I've ever tried to do, to do a sustained, emotional story with no dialog.

CASCADE: Darrel Anderson is get-

ting into that, but what he's doing is using thought and speech balloons containing pictures.

RICHARDS: The most difficult thing is your depiction of things. Everything has to be clearly readable visually. Hands, gestures, expressions have to be flawless, or else it won't work. We failed numerous times.

Also there's the problem that the American cartoon reading public hasn't really been educated to pantomime comics. European readers are used to seeing more pantomime strips. Even if there's dialog, they're used to a real strong visual flow.

CASCADE: Comics are light reading for people in this country, for the most part, even undergrounds. You sit down and read a comic book, pass 15 or 20 minutes, and then toss it aside.

RICHARDS: I like to insert a dwell factor in any kind of comics I do. There's a surface humor to it, and if you want to sit down and really think about it, there are deeper statements woven into the story. There's also the technique of just making interesting looking pictures so that you'll sit and stare for it for a while.

CASCADE: What are your goals?

RICHARDS: To become a daily syndicated cartoonist.

CASCADE: You're going for the big bucks?

RICHARDS: No, I think it's about time that it just get attacked. The new wave of cartoonists have just been sitting it out in their tents over the last ten years, and it's just gotten worse in the dailies. Just one or two comic strips are even relevant.

CASCADE: There are some new strips that are better, and different, and influenced by the underground, even.

RICHARDS: That's right, and I think it's about time that somebody from the underground claim their rightful inheritance, so to speak. There are a lot of really good underground cartoonists right now who would be capable of doing a daily strip, but a lot just don't



feel that they want to do that. Personally I think I want to.

CASCADE: *You'll have to do a lot of work on speculation, and you must realize what the syndicates are looking for. They want a gag every day, and a certain amount of slickness.*

RICHARDS: Who knows what they want, right? But the key to it is, if it sells, they'll want it. I think I can prove to them that I have a capability of reaching the mass public with an unorthodox style, and an inconsistency of style which they no longer are accepting. I was reading some Barney Google Sundays over at Bill Blackbeard's recently. He drew the trees differently every other week for about eight weeks, till he finally settled on how he wanted to draw his trees. And the characters themselves changed, off and on. Now, they want a rubber stamp. They don't want you evolving and constructing right there on the spot.

This is comics; it's people drawing and telling you stories. There is a populist effect to well-drawn comics. It's something they don't seem to go along with now. But if that was suddenly proven commercially viable, if 200 papers wanted that, then suddenly that would be in, and all the slickos would be shaking their lines around like they were just dashing it off.

CASCADE: *I hope you know the possibilities for a syndicated strip. If you get in 100 papers, you'll be making \$200 a day.*

RICHARDS: Oh yeah, I'm completely aware of that side of it. But it's not that important, really. First there's a dedication to the art-form that should be there, then you'll get rich, in a sense. I'm really sick and tired of people talking about things in comics instead of drawing them! They don't use alegories or metaphors anymore; they don't use the visualization that's the real strength of a well-drawn comic strip. Anything is capable of moving, talking, acting or being characterized.

It's drawings! The literary side of it is an intelligence that you apply to it as a writer. But now it's all writers! They might as well just eliminate the art, it might as well be polar bears in a snowstorm with just word balloons. It's just the same thing over and over again.

CASCADE: *Like "Sawdust" by Chester Gould?*

RICHARDS: Yeah, exactly. He nailed it on the head! He used alegories, metaphors, he uses graphics. He's one of the greats.

CASCADE: *Even in his senility.*

RICHARDS: Oh yeah. He's like a broken record now, but a great broken record. If you're gonna listen to a broken record, which one would you like? A bubble gum record, or a great jazz musician?

But I think it's just got to crack here pretty soon. The type of comics you see in the dailies is becoming more isolated, it doesn't carry any weight to it. There's Doonesbury, Casey, maybe Broom Hilda and several more that I think are good. The bulk of it is really bad stuff. I think they should just close a lot of it down. It's a rough racket, and hard to break into, and who knows what will happen in the next couple of years. I'm going to definitely make a try for it, real soon.

Ted Richards was interviewed in his studio in San Francisco on February 17, 1978. Sharing space with Ted in FASTDRAW STUDIOS are J. Michael Leonard, Larry Gonick and Ted's wife, Terry. After the interview, we went to lunch at a Mexican restaurant nearby. We were surprised to find, during a discussion over lunch, that we shared similar experiences as youths in the Panama Canal Zone. My thanks to Ted for his cooperation in making this interview possible. --AER



cont'd from page 10

# ZIPPY STORIES

(RIP OFF PRESS, 95¢)

Another small-sized reprint book from Rip Off, this one collecting the dada ramblings of Bill ("Don't Call Me Dada") Griffith. The cover sez it's "all in color," but you get one for the extra 20¢: a bland sorta vermillion. Despite that, this is a neat little volume of cartoons, particularly for Griffy fans. I like his stuff here better than the more recent detached "Griffith Observatory" material he's been doing for the Rip Off Comic Page.

Showcase of the issue is a Zippy tale that first appeared in weekly installments over '76/'77. Full of irrational happenings and unresolved events, the piece has our pinhead hero cruising California for adventure. If his hero seldom appears externally affected by what's going on about him, the format gives Griffith a chance to look at much that is appalling about '70s America...and hopefully affect his readers with the revelation. Maybe Griffith isn't dada after all.

(Literary allusion time: at one point in the story our hero quotes from The Ramones' "Pinhead," a GREAT punkrock rant that has a lyrical line that goes, "I don't wanna be a pinhead no more/I just met a nurse that I could go for." This during a meeting with Didi Glitz, Diane Noomin's ultratypical Seventies heroine.)

The rest of the issue has single pagers devoted to "Toadette Traits," "Griffith Observatory," and Alfred Jarry. While some of the cartoons seem a little too steeped in San Narciso, the cartoonist's oddly appealing cartoon body language more than makes up for it. (Griffith's characters don't move--they slog thru life.) A fine collection from a unique underground cartoonist.

I refuse to end this review with any pinhead jokes. I'm not Leslie Fiedler.

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